

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Argentina

CONFIDENTIAL

2 August 1948

SUBJECT Critical Condition of Argentine Railroads

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1. The serious condition of Argentine railroads is said to be primarily responsible for the recent creation of the Secretariat of Transportation, to be headed by Lt. Colonel Juan F. Castro, former military aide to President Peron and reportedly one of the president's closest advisers. The new Secretary will enjoy cabinet rank.
2. The condition of the railroads is so grave that unless needed rolling stock is obtained, the railroads may not be able to deliver harvests from the interior to the ports at the next harvest season.
3. Argentina requires 800,000,000 pesos worth of railroad equipment immediately to replace deteriorated stock, particularly locomotives since 50% of the railroad engines in Argentina are over 50 years old.
4. Argentina has recently obtained 95 Diesel engines for one-meter gauge track, and IAPI, the state trading agency, is seeking to purchase another 95 through the Siam Di Tella firm.
5. The government is seeking to purchase about 75 heavy-type locomotives in the United States. Castro is reported to have already canceled contracts for heavy locomotives in England since he believes one possible solution to the railroad equipment problem is to standardize the equipment to the extent that local circumstances (several different gauges) permit.
6. In September 1947, Argentina contracted for 2500 one-meter gauge railroad cars in Canada. These are said to have been built for Russia. Because of necessary alterations to the cars, none as yet has been delivered to Argentina.

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